

Our children and grandchildren won't remember how fast we reformed health care. They will remember how well we fixed it.

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

(Ms. HIRONO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, health insurance is not something we can take for granted. Every day, 14,000 Americans lose their coverage. A recent Treasury Department report noted that approximately half of all Americans under the age of 65 will lose their coverage at some point in the next 10 years.

Thousands are denied coverage because of preexisting conditions, like asthma, pregnancy, arthritis or diabetes. Millions more have no health insurance at all.

In Hawaii, public and private health insurance covers an estimated 92 percent of our population. That means that most of us have health insurance and, because of our Prepaid Health Care Act, our coverage is among the best in the country.

At the same time, Hawaii's economy has been hard hit, and our unemployment rate reached a 31-year high this past May, nearly doubling what it was just last year. Other States are similarly situated. H.R. 3200 will provide affordable health care coverage for those who lose it or never had it.

I urge my colleagues' support for health care reform now.

TAX INCREASE ON MIDDLE-INCOME WORKING AMERICANS

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, as we debate the issue of health care, the administration late last Friday night did something that was 180 degrees from what was promised in last year's campaign. I am referring to a tax increase on middle-income working Americans.

Yes, last Friday night, the administration announced that there will be a 35 percent tariff on inexpensive tires coming in from China. The interesting thing is this was done in response to a petition from the steelworkers union without a single U.S. tire manufacturer signing on in support of this. In fact, they have even gone on so far as to say that if this 35 percent tax is imposed, they will not go into the business of actually manufacturing inexpensive tires.

So what does that mean, Mr. Speaker? It means that we will see not only a 35 percent tax increase on working Americans, but we will not see a single job created here in the United States of America.

We need to realize we also create the potential for great retaliation in a wide range of other areas. This decision is

bad for the American worker and bad for the U.S. economy.

HEALTH CARE PREMIUM INCREASES

(Mr. HALL of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HALL of New York. Mr. Speaker, over the last few weeks, I have heard stories from businesses, nonprofits, individuals, and even health care providers in my district who have received health care premium increases up to 39 percent. These increases are unfair, unsustainable and crippling our economy.

These drastic increases are likely to continue as long as private insurers are allowed to regulate themselves. That's why we must vote soon on a comprehensive plan to improve health care, a plan that will reduce costs for the middle class, end insurance company abuses, and increase stable, quality care and access for all Americans.

We need to get reform done but get it right. We must keep listening and engaging with our constituents to ensure that reform will benefit all Americans. With health care premiums growing three times faster than wages, we can't afford to wait.

AMERICAN JOBS HURT BY PROPOSED HEALTH CARE LEGISLATION

(Mr. BOOZMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, the American health care system is in need of reform, but the current proposals are not the solution the American public is looking for. The House health care plan will create a surtax on small business, the lifeblood of our economy, to help pay for the \$1.5 trillion reform.

My constituent, Donald Dickey, is a small business owner and is already being forced to cut his workforce by more than 70 percent because of the current economy. Under the proposed health care reform bill, Donald says he will be forced to close his business because of the combination of the new surtax and requirements for employers to provide health coverage for all workers.

We need to work on commonsense solutions that encourage job growth, expand access to affordable health care, and give Americans the ability to choose a plan that fits their needs. I am willing to work with my colleagues to achieve those goals in a final bill.

STATE OF OUR ECONOMY

(Mr. PASCRELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, on a day after the President addressed this

country on the need for regulatory reform in the financial sector, I stand before you to discuss the state of the economy. Unfortunately, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle fail to comprehend the inextricable connection between the economy and the need for comprehensive health care reform.

We must remember that the extraordinary rise in health care costs and insurance premiums has affected several segments of our economy. Surging health care costs slow the rate of job growth by making it more expensive for companies to add new workers.

As health care costs rise, corporate operating margins are cut, which reduces the capacity of firms to grow by investing in research, plant and equipment. Furthermore, high and escalating out-of-pocket costs are forcing families to delay mortgage payments on their homes.

Since enactment of the Recovery and Reinvestment Act, we have prevented the layoff of tens of thousands of teachers, police officers, and other essential public servants, and we have put people to work renovating schools and hospitals without one vote from the other side.

TORT REFORM WILL REDUCE HEALTH CARE COSTS

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last week President Obama called for the administration to establish demonstration projects to measure the effectiveness of tort reform. But we don't need to demonstrate that tort reform works; we have already proved that in States where it has been enacted.

In my home State of Texas, for example, health care premiums fell by 30 percent. That means Texans pay less to have better health care and more options. According to a study by the Harvard School of Public Health, 40 percent of medical malpractice suits filed in the U.S. are without merit, 40 percent.

A Department of Health and Human Services study found that unlimited excessive damages add \$70 billion to \$126 billion annually to health care costs. These costs are then passed along to the patient in the price of health care.

Tort reform will reduce health care costs by tens of billions of dollars. We don't need to test tort reform; we need to enact it.

PEOPLE LIKE HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mr. INSLEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, at my townhall meetings, I was amazed at